

CLAIMS

1. A method for inhibiting or suppressing acid mist generated in a copper electrowinning method comprising adding to electrolyte from which copper is electrowon, a soluble surfactant comprising an extract from the *Quillaja saponaria* Molina tree.

2. The method for inhibiting or suppressing acid mist according to claim 1, wherein the derivative from the *Quillaja saponaria* Molina tree contains a triterpenic saponin.

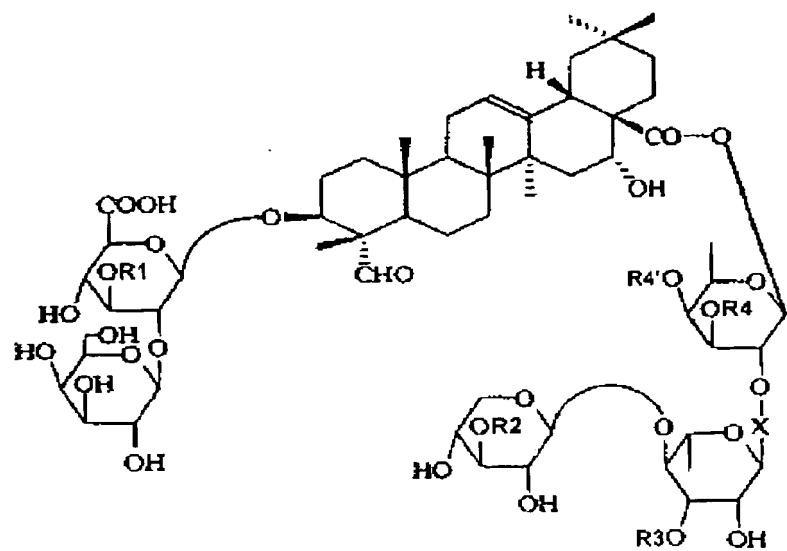
3. The method for inhibiting or suppressing acid mist according to claim 2, wherein said quillaja extract contains an heterogeneous mixture of triterpenic saponins, having a triterpenic core with sugar chains bonded to carbons 3 and 28 of the triterpene.

4. The method for inhibiting or suppressing acid mist according to claim 1, wherein the extract is added in an amount of 0.3 to 10.0 ppm based on triterpenic saponins, to the copper electrolyte.

5. The method for inhibiting or suppressing acid mist according to claim 1, wherein the extract decreases surface tension of the electrolyte to values below 65 dynes/cm at a temperature range of the electrolyte of 30°C to 50°C.

6. The method for inhibiting or suppressing acid mist according to claim 3, wherein the extract decreases surface tension of the electrolyte to values below 65 dynes/cm at a temperature range of the electrolyte of 30°C to 50°C.

7. The method for inhibiting or suppressing acid mist according to claim 2, wherein the extract contains a triterpenic saponin of the formula



wherein R^1 is a saccharide,

R^2 is H or a saccharide

R^3 is H

R^4 is acyl or a saccharide, and

$R^{4'}$ is a saccharide,